

FAA Background Information Regarding U.S. Civil Aviation – Libya

Due to the current conflict for control of the Libyan capital, Tripoli, the FAA assesses there is an increased inadvertent risk to U.S. civil aviation operating at all altitudes in the territory and airspace of Libya from west of 17 degrees east longitude and north of 29 degrees north latitude. As a result, on 06 April 2019, the FAA published Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) KICZ A0012/19, prohibiting U.S. civil flight operations at all altitudes in that area. This all-altitude flight prohibition is in addition to Special Federal Aviation Regulation No. 112—Prohibition Against Certain Flights in the Tripoli Flight Information Region (FIR) (HLLL), which prohibits all flights by U.S. airmen and operators at altitudes below Flight level (FL) 300 in the entire Tripoli FIR (HLLL), which includes areas of international airspace managed by Libya.

The FAA is concerned about the ongoing conflict for control of the capital, Tripoli. Libya National Army (LNA) forces have begun operations aimed at seizing control of Tripoli, including Tripoli International Airport (HLLT). The Tripoli-based Government of National Accord (GNA), with support of militias, has conducted counterattacks, including tactical airstrikes on LNA forces. LNA has declared a military zone and is threatening to shoot down aircraft operating in portions of northwestern Libya.

Both GNA and advancing LNA forces have access to advanced man-portable air defense systems (MANPADS) and likely anti-aircraft artillery. These ground-based anti-aircraft weapon systems present a risk to U.S. civil aviation at altitudes below FL300. However, LNA forces have fighter aircraft capable of intercepting civil aircraft operating at altitudes at and above FL300 in the self-declared military zone in northwestern Libya, which may present an inadvertent risk to U.S. civil aviation operations overflying the area. While the LNA fighter aircraft threat is likely intended for GNA-associated military aircraft, an inadvertent risk remains for U.S. civil aviation operations at all altitudes in northwestern Libya due to potential miscalculation or misidentification. This risk necessitates an all-altitude flight prohibition for the geographic area specified in KICZ NOTAM A0012/19.

The FAA will continue to monitor risks to U.S. civil aviation operating the territory and airspace of Libya and the Tripoli FIR (HLLL) and make adjustments to its prohibition for U.S. civil aviation as necessary.

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